

the ability to retain interest in companies that will be directly affected by the policies of the Department of Education. Representative PRICE, the nominee for HHS, refused to meet with several members of the committee before his nomination is scheduled for a vote.

This is not how nominations should go. Now, I know—with a swamped Cabinet of bankers, billionaires, more wealth, more potential conflicts of interest, more positions way far over from what the American people want—why our Republican colleagues want to rush these nominees through. But let me reiterate that they will have tremendous power over the lives of average Americans. A few extra days to examine and explore what they believe to make sure that they don't have conflicts of interest—who wouldn't be for that, unless they don't want the facts to come out?

So we are not stalling nominations. This isn't sport. This is serious stuff. We have genuine concerns about the qualifications and ethical standards of these nominees, and we are going to continue to seek an open, transparent, and thorough vetting process for the President's Cabinet. These folks are going to be in power for 4 years, maybe. Then they deserve a few days of careful vetting. They should not be all rushed in a day, with hurried debate, hurrying them through in the dark of night—no way. We are going to use whatever abilities we have here to make sure that doesn't happen.

TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

Mr. SCHUMER. Fourth, on the Executive action that the President will be withdrawing the United States from the TPP, or the Trans-Pacific Partnership, as you know, my views on trade are probably closer to President Trump's than they were to President Obama and President Bush. I opposed NAFTA and TPP. But the fact that the President announced with fanfare that he will be withdrawing the United States from the Trans-Pacific Partnership is not news. The Trans-Pacific Partnership was dead long ago, before President Trump took office. That is why Leader MCCONNELL didn't bring it up on the floor in the lameduck session. It didn't have the votes and was even further away from getting votes in the Senate. It was over.

We await real action on trade, one of the President's signature campaign issues. Now, what President Trump said in his campaign over and over was that, on his first day as President, he would label China a currency manipulator. That hasn't happened. Even though China is letting their currency float at the moment, you can be sure they will return to manipulating their currency—hurting our exports, helping them unfairly compete with American jobs and businesses—as soon as it is in their best interest to do so.

I worked, frankly, with the nominee for Attorney General, JEFF SESSIONS,

and with many others to try and get both President Bush and President Obama to label China a currency manipulator. It didn't happen, unfortunately. But President Trump promised that he was going to do it on his first day in office, and it has not happened. If President Trump wants to send a shot across the bow that he is getting serious on trade, addressing the currency issue would have been a lot more effective than a meaningless and redundant Executive order on the TPP.

While we are on the subject of trade, I remind the President of the two simple rules he laid out in his inaugural address: buy American and hire American—two rules that his current businesses don't follow. Trump shirts and ties are made in China; Trump furniture is made in Turkey. While he is importuning others to “make it in America”—I don't disagree with that—he should start by demanding it of his own businesses. How can he expect others to do something that he is not doing? He wants the automobile makers to make cars in America. So do I. Then he ought to stop making his ties in China and his furniture in Turkey. He ought to set a good example. Until he totally and completely divests himself from his businesses, which is the right thing to do, he ought to start following the rules himself that he has laid out for the country.

REPUBLICAN ALTERNATIVE TO THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, this morning, two of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, the Senator from Maine and the Senator from Louisiana, introduced a proposal purporting to be a Republican alternative to the Affordable Care Act. While I sympathize with my two colleagues, whom I respect a great deal and who understand that repeal without replace would be devastating for our country, their proposal would create chaos, not affordable care for millions of Americans. It is much like the vague Executive order issued by the President on Friday that my friend, the Senator from Maine, Ms. COLLINS, called “confusing.”

Their proposal today illustrates the dilemma that both the Republicans and the White House are in. It is nearly impossible to keep the benefits of the Affordable Care Act without keeping the whole thing. There is an easier way out of the pickle our Republican friends have created for themselves. Republicans can and should stop repeal plans, which are disruptive, and work with Democrats to improve, not gut, the Affordable Care Act and health care system for all Americans.

Thank you. I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the nomination of MIKE POMPEO to be Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of MIKE POMPEO, of Kansas, to be Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 6 hours of debate, equally divided in the usual form.

The majority whip is recognized.

WELCOMING A NEW DAY IN THE COUNTRY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I had a chance to listen to our friend, the Democratic leader, and it is becoming clearer exactly what his strategy is for dealing with the aftermath of the November 8 election, in which Republicans retained the majority in both Houses of Congress and picked up the White House to boot. I realize it was a shock to our Democratic friends—the election that occurred on November 8 and the verdict of the American people, given the choices they were presented. What is becoming increasingly clear is that the Democratic leader, the Senator from New York, believes that Democrats and the country are better served by being an opposition party—in other words, opposed to everything that is proposed by either the President or anybody on this side of the aisle.

Rather than working together with us to try to build consensus, to try to address the challenges that face the country, what they are going to do is to sit back and enjoy the failure—which is what they are hoping and praying for—when we try to do this alone. We know our system is built on bipartisan cooperation and consensus building, and I have to tell my friend, the Senator from New York, Mr. SCHUMER, that I doubt his party's political prospects are going to improve as long as people see them as a restoration of the status quo at a time when they voted for change. Rather than working together to find solutions to the challenges that face our country, they have decided to sit back, drag their heels, oppose, and say no to each and every constructive solution offered by either the White House or this side of the aisle. I really do hope they decide that this is a recipe for political failure, continuing to wander in the political wilderness.

At a time when the voters voted for change, they are arguing for a restoration of the status quo—the direction that the country, the majority of voters, and certainly those whose votes are reflected in the Electoral College felt was a wrong direction for our country.

So I believe that most Americans greeted the peaceful transfer of power